



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Sinnissippi Centers' Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic

New grant program provides funding for a variety of improvements.

(Dixon, IL)

Sinnissippi Centers is in the beginning stages of a new project funded by a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) FY 2021 Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC) Expansion Grant program.

The project began in the fall of 2021. Project goals include increasing access to psychiatry and Medication Assisted Treatment, implementing intensive team-based approaches including ACT and Substance Use Disorder Community Support Teams, enhancing primary care screening, and referral, and care coordination.

Among more recent developments under the project, Sinnissippi has opened a new Living Room Drop-in Center. The center is operated by Recovery Support Specialists and is a safe, comfortable, and free non-clinical space where you can talk with a peer if you are experiencing emotional stress or overwhelming symptoms due to life circumstances. Sinnissippi has also been able to certify that we meet all the requirements to qualify as a CCBHC by SAMHSA. "This was a major accomplishment as it required significant changes to processes, policies, staffing and programming, says Patrick Phelan, Sinnissippi Centers' President/CEO.

As part of our CCBHC project, Sinnissippi has hired and is still in the process of hiring several more positions in order to support this model. "We are struggling to fill positions much like other businesses and organizations have struggled during this pandemic," adds Phelan. "Our workforce challenges are leading to challenges moving some of those plans from policy and procedure into full action. For example, when we can fully staff our initiatives, we will have greatly enhanced physical health screening and intervention, as well as care coordination that ensures the full needs of the individuals are met.

On the other hand, we have been able to improve our intake process, begin to initiate training on new Evidence Based Practices and outcome measures and many other achievements already," says Phelan.

"We know that folks in our communities are struggling, and we're doing our best to meet those needs, to recruit, and to maintain competitive salaries to the best of our ability to meet those needs in a challenging environment. We understand the impact of the pandemic on behavioral health and are we have strived to the best of our ability to be there to meet those needs," adds Phelan. This project is among several initiatives to meet the needs of individuals and our communities. You know, it's OK to let someone know you are struggling, a lot of us are during this time, and we just want people to know that we are still there to help despite all the challenges we face," says Phelan.

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“For people with serious mental illness, this CCBHC model more closely integrates primary care with behavioral health,” adds Phelan. “By addressing primary care needs, we are able to identify physical issues sooner and help them link to our medical providers and get treatment.” Under the CCBHC model providers are allowed to use funding to provide care to individuals who do not have any health care coverage.

The Excellence in Mental Health Act established federal guidelines that defines Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs). CCBHCs provide comprehensive outpatient mental health care to any individuals who need the services, regardless of income. The services CCBHCs must provide for those with mental health and addiction needs include:

- Access to emergency care 24/7
- Instant risk assessment and screening
- Treatment planning
- Case management
- Family and peer support
- Specialized care for veterans and active-duty military
- Prompt, easy access to care

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